

A

REVIEW

OF THE

Affairs of *FRANCE*:

Purg'd from the Errors and Partiality of *Newf-Writers*
and *Petty-Statefmen*, of all Sides.

Saturday, April 29. 1704.

Such is the Partiality of Mens Humours, that I must not Attempt to say any thing that is well of an Enemy, without a previous Assurance, that I am not going over to his Party: 'Tis something hard that a Man cannot be allow'd to own any thing that's Honourable in the Man we fight with, tho' he has Signaliz'd himself to all the World in the Fact, and all Men must allow it to be true.

Some reply, But tell us, then, the Criminal things he has done; as you have shewn us his bright, shew us his dark side; be Impartial, and as we see the Hero, let us see the Tyrant too.

Why really, Gentlemen, I am afraid I shall never please you that way neither; for that tho' I pretend to speak as plain *English* as any-body, and too plain for some People; yet possibly when I come to it, I may not call him all the Monsters, and Barbarous Perjured Tyrants, at least in Express Terms, as some People may expect from me.

And yet I shall go near to do the World Justice as to that part of the French Affairs too, but one part must come before another, and the Reader must have Patience; he that will not, is desir'd to let this Paper alone, and ought indeed neither to read this nor any thing else.

Let the King of *France* be what he will, and have done what he will, he began his Executive Power with an Attempt upon his own Subjects, which all the World said he would never be able to bring to pass; and tho' all Men allow'd it was an Attempt as Glorious as could have been thought of, yet its being very unlikely to be effected, made the People less afraid of its Effects, than afterwards they found Cause for.

As unlikely as it was, he began with so much Solemnity, and carry'd it on with so much Resolution, that he has made an Entire Conquest among his own Subjects, of the most prevailing, and deeplyest rooted Crime that ever Nation had so generally Espoused, I mean that of Duelling.

I need not give the Reader the trouble of examining the Nature of this Crime, nor the mistaken Point of Honour, upon which so many Noble Families in that Kingdom, almost on every occasion, Sacrificed the best and bravest Branches of their Blood.

This unhappy Temper had prevail'd to such an intolerable Excess, that if we may believe the Memoirs of those Times, above 400 Gentlemen were kill'd in this manner, by the Sword of Mistaken Gallantry in one Year, many of which fell by the hands of

Q. their

their dearest Friends, and sometimes of their nearest Relations.

The first considerable Action his most Christian Majesty did, after his Entering Publickly upon the Administration, was to Publish an Edict against Duelling, in which he made it Death without Mercy, to give or accept a Challenge; and took a Solemn Oath on the Evangelists, in the Presence of the Cardinal, and Arch-Bishop of *Paris*, That whether Principal or Second, he would never Grant his Pardon to any one concerned in a Duel, whether there was any Murder Committed or no, but they shou'd die for it, tho' it were a Prince of the Blood.

This Oath his Majesty took with so much Solemnity, and has observ'd with so much Exactness, that in some Cases that have since happened, where Persons of the first Rank have been concerned, and after having fled from Justice, their Friends have Solicited their Return, his Majesty has Rejected the Intercession of the Greatest Princes, and Refused the very Dispensation of the Pope, which has been offered him on that Head.

Will any Man object against this Example, being recommended to the Practice of our Superiours, only because it is *French*?

The same Objection may lie against the Sacred Observation of a Solemn Promise, because the *Turks* are (to our shame be it spoken) more Punctual Observers of their words, than the *Christians*; and 'tis a horrid thing indeed, that we should Imitate the Actions of the known Enemies of the Christian Religion.

I should be glad to see all the Christian Princes of *Europe*, Imitate the King of *France* in this Particular; and Learn from him, That 'tis not making a good Law, but a punctual and exact Execution of the Law when made, which is the only way to give it a necessary Authority, and a Force that all Men shall Regard.

'Tis confess'd, the *English* are not so much addicted to this Volly as the *French* have been, but we have some Examples of this Mischief which have left the black Remembrance of them in the Memories of some of our best Families; the Blood of which remaining to this day unpunish'd,

may, for ought I know, lie at their Door, who ought to have done more Justice than to have suffered the Murderer of the Father, to continue openly to Debauch the Mother, and Insult the Children.

If any Men ask who I mean, it must be some who are very ignorant of *English* Affairs, and remember nothing of the Late Duel between the Duke of *Buckingham*, and the Earl of *Shrewsbury*; or of the Petition of the Late Earl of *Shrewsbury's* Children, for Justice against the Murderers of their Father, which was Lodg'd in the House of Lords, tho' without any extraordinary Redress.

The Death of the Younger Son of the same Earl of *Shrewsbury*, and Brother to the Present Duke, who was kill'd in a Duel by the Late Duke of *Grafton*, is a second Instance of Noble Blood shed in *England* by Duelling, for which no body was ever punish'd; No, not so much as Question'd: And both these had the Misfortune to make Wounds in one of the most Gallant, and Antient Families of the *English* Nobility; whose Line, if his Present Grace the Duke of *Shrewsbury* leaves no Issue, may be in danger, by these Murthers, to be Extinct.

This Digression may not be Inchoherent with our Design in this History, as it may lead us by Reflecting on the Fatal Consequences of such things, among our own Gentry, where these Cases happen but seldom, to Compare it with the *French*, where hardly a day pass'd, but one Family or other was to be seen in Mourning, for the Dismal Effects of this Genteel way of Murder.

We are not without some more Modern Examples in *England*, of the Fatal Disasters which attend this unhappy Custom, and Sir *Henry Hubbard*, a *Norfolk* Gentleman, and of an Antient Family; Colonel *Colt*, Mr. *Mumfort*, and several others, might have still been alive, and Serviceable to their Native Country, if the same Severity had been Practis'd in *England* against this fordid Misconstruction of Gallantry and Honour.

To me there seems but the Difference of one Minute Circumstance, between this Method of Duelling, and the *Italian* Custom

from of Assassination, and the reason of the Matter seems to lie against the former ; for if a Man has so affronted or offended me, that I think he ought to dye for it ; where is the Sence of my laying him an even Wager, whether he shall have his Throat cut that has offered me an Injury, or I that have receiv'd it ? But if the Case were stated fairly, I ought first to have Reparation for the Injury, and then fighting is more upon the square.

Fighting a Duel is just throwing the Dice for a Man's Life, and 'tis not a great deal of odds, that both shall not fall : Now to me there seems no manner of Correspondence between the thing and the Cause of it ; if both had forfeited their Lives to the Law ; and one might have been spar'd, there had been some Reason to try who should be the Man, but in this Case I give a Man two opportunities to Mischief me against my one ; the Affront is the first, and an even Chance for my Life is the second.

This reminds me of a certain Story which I can recommend to the Reader from very good Authority.

A certain Gentleman, whose Wife was no Honester than she should be, had some

Private Intimation of it from a Friend, and was so particularly led to the point, that he surprized a Gentleman in Bed with her.

The Person finding himself in his hands, Demands his leave to rise and take his Sword ; *wisbal my Heart, Sir,* says the Gentleman, *and your Boots too, if you please, and take your Mistress with you, I have nothing to say to you,* the Gentleman gets up and tells him, *Sir, you have done like a Man of Honour, and I cannot but tell you, that if you expect the Satisfaction usual upon such Cases, I think myself oblig'd to give it. No : why so,* Replies the Gentleman ? *Let me Lie with your Wife first, and then I'll fight you wisbal my Heart ; 'tis my Wife has affronted me,* says he, *and not you ; and I know how to deal with her :* and so turn'd her out of Doors.

I can pass my word this Gentleman was no Coward, but I can't promise that one Man in Forty would Act so much Discretion ; but he was certainly in the Right of it ; for it can never be Rational, That because my Wife will let another Man lie with her, therefore I should stake my Life at an even Rate, and lay an equal Wager, who shall be kill'd for it.

Mercure Scandale :

O R,

A D V I C E from the Scandalous C L U B.

THE Reputation of our Society having been lately Reflected on by sundry Persons and on different Occasions : They have been taken up very much in Debating, whether they should continue their Endeavours against the Follies of the Times, or lay down their Arms, and let all Men alone to be as vicious, and to write as much Nonsense as they please.

Some that said they were Friends to the Author, Alledg'd he expos'd himself too much, and ought to expect Sir William Coventry's Fate, that is, have his Nose slit ; represented strange things from the Resentments of the Persons concern'd, and bid him have a care of himself.

Others told the Society, That no Man ought to take upon him Publick Reproofs, and Print other Mens Faults, unless he was sure he had none of his own.

A Third sort told them, it was not just to Expose Men for their Crimes, tho' they were real ; that the Laws were sufficient to Punish in such Cases, and no Man had any thing to do with it, and at this rate, no Man would keep him Company.

Upon a Serious Debate of these Matters, The Society call'd for their Books, and Review'd the Review, and found in the first Proposal laid down, the Author had consider'd the Hazard of telling a Vicious Age their Scandalous Crimes, and had declar'd that

that he would treat Vice and Vicious Actions with the utmost Severity; and that therefore all People were fairly prepared to expect it.

As to the Danger, the Author professes himself Perfectly unconcern'd about it, and Questions not, but his Hands will, according to their Duty, defend his Nose; he knows no Man particularly concern'd but the Guilty, and if any such thinks himself too plainly pointed at, and is resolv'd to add one Villany to another, he is welcome to make the Attempt at his Peril.

And yet the Author Affirms, he has all along rather expos'd the Crime than the Person; and if any Author has afterwards Saddled the Man's back with the Crime, and told the World who he is, he ought first to be assured that he was the Man Intended, or else he fathers the Crime of Scandalizing the Man upon himself; and the Author cannot but think it unfair, that when he tells the World a Story, another should pretend to tell them his meaning.

And as he shall always avoid fixing Reproaches upon Persons or Families, with the same Caution as he would be Treated himself, especially in Case of *Common slips in Mens Morals*, which all Men are equally Subject to, and himself as much as another.

Yet with submission, he thinks there are some Cases so Notorious, and some value themselves so much upon the Honour of outfinning their Neighbours, that they really claim no Quarter.

However, as he has yet pointed no Man out so plain, that any thing but his own Guilt can tell him 'tis he; so he thinks that Gentleman who gave a Man a knock on the Pate at a *Coffee-House* in *Cornhill*, for telling him a Certain Story in the last Review but one, was meant of him, did himself Justice, Corrected him as he deserv'd, and the Author thanks him for it.

The Author is ready to ask any Man's Pardon for a real Offence, and scorns to do it where there is none: He Declares he endeavours to tell his Tale so, as to expose the Crime and not the Person; but if People will be guessing at Folks, and then tell him by *Inuendo*, they are sure they hit right;

the *Injustice* lies at their Door, not at the Author's, and the Person ought to use 'em as in the Story above.

The Author is sorry he gives any body Offence, but as exposing scandalous and unusual Follies is the only occasion, he is very ealie, and sees no Reason why a Wise Man should be disturb'd at it.

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